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A N
H I S T O R I C A L
A N D
P I C T U R E S Q U E
DESCRIPTION
OF THE
COUNTY of NICE.



L O N D O N :
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M D C C X C I I .



AN
HISTORICAL
AND
PICTURESQUE
DESCRIPTION
OF THE
COUNTY OF NICE.

ALTHOUGH the County of Nice be on this side the Mountains, Geographers have always considered it as a Province of Italy, since they have given to this beautiful part of Europe the Vard for a western limit, which is also the boundary of the County, and flows into the sea at a league distance from the Capital.

This Province, so justly celebrated for the mildness of its climate, and the beauty of the country, is notwithstanding very mountainous, being partly covered by the maritime Alps; it is bordered on the East by Piemont and the States of Genoa; on the South, by the Mediterranean; on the West, by the Vard, which separates it from France; and on the North, by Dauphiny. Its length is about twenty leagues of the country, which make about thirty-six English miles; its breadth ten leagues; and its population an hundred and twenty thousand souls.

In the time of the Romans it was called the Province of the Maritime Alps, and belonged to the Intimeliens, or rather, the Vediantians. It was successively subdued by the Goths, Burgundians, French, the Counts of Provence,

Provence, the Houses of Arles, Arragon, and Anjou, from whom it was taken by Amadeus the seventh Count of Savoy, in the year one thousand three hundred and eighty-seven.

The town of Nice is Capital of the County, and the seat of the Senate, the Bishoprick, and Government. It has become within these few years a delightful abode, by the number of strangers who assemble there in the Winter, either to re-establish their health, or to enjoy the mildness of the climate and the beauty of the country, where an unceasing verdure presents eternal Spring.

Few travellers go to Italy without visiting this justly celebrated province; the town is situated on the sea-shore, and backed by a rock entirely insulated, upon which was formerly a castle much esteemed for its position (as may be judged by examining the plan); it was destroyed in the year one thousand seven hundred and six, by Marshall Berwick, the garrison being too thin to defend the extent of the works. There is now a distinction made between the old and the new town; this last is regular, the houses well-built, and the streets wide. Its position is by the side of the sea, and is terminated on one side by a charming terrace, which serves for a promenade. From this spot the mountains of Corsica may be perceived at sun-rise. At the bottom of this terrace there is another public promenade, on one side bordered by a large alley of trees, and on the other by the torrent of Paillion. The old town is more populous; but the streets are narrow, and the houses ill-built; strangers scarcely ever think of lodging there. This part of the town forms an amphitheatre upon the declivity of the rock where the castle was built, and which formerly separated the town from the port of Lympia. The edict of the King in one thousand seven hundred and forty-nine, which established the freedom of the port, has contributed very much to the population of the town. Any person may live peaceably in this Province without fear of being troubled on points of Faith, provided they conduct themselves with decorum. The town has three suburbs:

1st, That of St. John, which conducts to Cimier, St. Ponce, and St. Andrew. The Promenades this way are very delightful, and may be enjoyed in a carriage.

2d, That of the Poudriere.

3d, That of the Croix de Marbre, or Marble-Cross. This suburb is new, and the English almost always lodge in it, being very near the town. The houses are commodious, facing on one side the great road which leads to France, and on the other a fine garden with a prospect of the sea. This suburb is now called Newborough; all the houses are separate from each other; the company hire them for the season, that is, from October till May. There are apartments to be had from fifteen to two hundred and fifty louis.

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The proprietors commonly furnish linen and plate, besides other necessities. There are also in the New Town very large and commodious houses, as well as in the New Road, which is opened from the town to the port, by cutting that part of the rock which inclined towards the sea. The situation is delightful, and the warmest in Winter, being entirely covered from the North wind, and quite open to the South.

Since the demolition of the castle, Nice is without a fortification; and there are several small hills on which batteries might be erected, which would command the town. There is however the castle of Mount Alban, a small fortress on a mountain of the same name. It is also a state prison, and commands the ports of Nice and Villa Franca.

People who have not seen this town for twenty years would hardly know it again; so great are the alterations, the major part of which are to be ascribed to the Marquis de St. Marzan, Commandant General of the Cavalry, who was formerly Governor of the County of Nice, and is now of Turin. It is a happiness to live in a country where the discernment and benignity of the Sovereign calls forth those who can contribute to the service of the State, and the public utility.

To this illustrious Personage, the Marquis de St. Marzan, travellers are indebted for the surprizing road which is just finished to penetrate into Piedmont with carriages. Many of the English have already passed it in coaches. This road is at present passable nine months in the year; but, as it is proposed to cut the Col de Tendi about one third the height of the mountain, there is no doubt but it will be so all the year, which will be of infinite service to the country. The enlargement of the town is to be attributed to it, which, added to the increase of commerce that must proceed from that of the inhabitants, leaves no doubt but that this town will become, in the course of time, one of the most considerable upon the coast of Italy, from its position and the fineness of its climate.

At Nice are shipped all the goods which are exported from the dominions of the King of Sardinia, and it is also the general *depôt* of merchandize. The shipping business is transacted at the port of Lympia, which communicates, as was before observed, with the town, by a fine road cut out of the rock. The position of this port is charming, and admirably formed by nature, being at the foot of a rock, where the citadel formerly stood, and flanked on the other side by a mountain of calcareous stone covered with olive trees.

There is seventeen feet water, which is sufficient for ships of three hundred tons. In no port of Italy are ships safer in a heavy sea, nor can lay at anchor more commodiously, there being, with great ingenuity, formed in the

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pier kinds of cells for the sailors, where they have fresh water at hand for their use.

The piers and the quays are almost all modern; for it is not more than twenty years since only small barks laden with wine could go in, it being then a miserable shallow: but now a number of large merchant ships, Danes, Dutch, English, and French, especially in winter, are constantly there. One of the greatest advantages in this port is the number of springs of fresh water, which are in great abundance, and disposed with much skill for the public utility; an inestimable benefit to the seafaring people.

His Sardinian Majesty, who, with paternal care, is ever occupied about the prosperity and advantage of his subjects, gives *gratis* to persons of any nation whatever who chuse to establish themselves at this port, the ground to build upon, provided they conform to the general plan.

The ordinary articles of exportation from this province are Oils, which vie with those of Aix in Provence, and are cheaper; Wine, the greatest part of which is sent to England; Rice, which comes from Piedmont, as well as Hemp, in which a great trade is carried on; Tallow, Soap, Oranges, Lemons, Essences, &c.

The Judicature is composed of three Councils, chosen from the three orders of citizens, and a Supreme Council. The Police belongs to the Commandant in the absence of the Governor, and he has about two thousand men under his command.

Ordinary justice is administered by a Prefect, whose authority corresponds with that of the Bailiffs in France, and the appeal from his decision is directed to the senate of the town.

The Consulate, a tribunal formed of a Committee of the Senate, gives final judgment in matters of commerce.

There are no taxes either in town or country upon real or personal property, except a rate upon provisions; and for this reason, the sale of them is confined to persons appointed by authority of government. This frequently hurts the consumption, and makes the purchase somewhat troublesome; but there is a great abundance of every thing, and living is not dearer than in the provinces of France.

The language of the country is a provincial dialect; but French is spoken in all polite companies; even the common people understand and converse in that language very frequently.

The ordinances of the King are in Italian, as well as the studies in the colleges. The company is brilliant at Nice during the stay of the strangers; and the amusements of the Carnival are, in proportion to the size of the town, as lively as in any of the great ones of France. There is always an Italian
opera,

opera, a concert, and masked ball, alternately, and the company play rather high.

Among the celebrated men to whom this country has given birth are mentioned Dominique Cassini, Maraldi, and Carl Vanloo, who was immediately of Nice. The Literati that at present inhabit it are the Count de la Coste, who successfully cultivates that part of the mathematicks which relates to mechanicks; Mr. Cristini, advocate and director of the Typographick Society, who have published many Italian books, some of which are a very fine type; the Chevalier de Revel, son of the Count of Saint Andrè Commandant of Nice, and Mr. Le Seurre, Consul for France at Nice.

There are but few antiquities in this town; yet, upon the hill of Cimier, or Cemenelium, which is three leagues North from the town, some ruins remain, which give reason to suppose, that a very considerable town, the capital of the Roman Maritime Province, was there situated. The successive devastations of the Goths, Lombards, and Saracens, have ruined it in such a manner, that no one could suppose a town ever existed in the place, if there were not the remains of a bath, a temple, and also of an amphitheatre, which last is very cognizable, its circumference being still perfect, as well as some steps, which may be perceived, although the area is now filled up with olive trees. The temple is become the habitation of a private person. On the hill may be enjoyed a most beautiful prospect from a small eminence at the bottom of the garden of the monks of Cimier. The eye takes in the sea and the whole of the town, while on the left is the charming valley of Paillon, or St. Ponce; and on the right, that of St. Barthelemi; both of them are covered with country seats, which (although much neglected by the possessors, who employ no art to second nature, by whom they have been so highly favoured,) still present the most beautiful landscapes in the world.

It is impossible to find a happier climate than Nice, both for Summer and Winter.

Reaumer's thermometer, in 1781, never fell more than three degrees below the freezing point, and that only for two days; while at Geneva it fell ten; and in the course of the Winter of 1785, it only fell two degrees, while at Geneva it fell fifteen. The month of May is rarely so fine in France, as February at Nice. The Summer is not so hot as might be expected. The thermometer never rises more than twenty-four degrees above temperate in the shade; and there is always an agreeable sea-breeze from ten in the morning till sun-set, when the land-breeze comes on. There are many old people in the country: the common disorders are pleurifies.

The country about Nice is perfectly answerable to so fine a sky; the view at first appears very limited, and one is much surprized in walking to find continually

continually delightful plains and vallies, whose position one never would have imagined.

There are three chains of graduated mountains, the last of which confound their summits with the Alps; and to this triple rampart is owing the mild temperature so sensibly different from the neighbouring parts.

The cultivation of the ground is as rich as can be desired. There are alternatively a row of corn and beans, separated by vines attached to different fruit-trees, the almond and fig; so that the earth being incessantly cultivated, and covered with trees, olive, orange, cedar, pomegranate, laurel, and myrtle, causes the constant appearance of Spring, and forms a fine contrast with the summits of the Alps, in the background, covered with snow. The culture of the earth is all performed by manual labour, and with one instrument, of the form of a pickaxe, very large, and almost square. The common measure of the country is the pan, which is about nine inches three quarters of France, for four pans make a Paris ell. This measure is for merchandise. The trabue is another measure, which serves for labour. It is twelve pans. The foeterse is used to measure land, and it is twelve trabues square, or three hundred and twenty-four inches square superficies.

The money of Nice is the same as that of Turin; but French money is current. The louis passes for twenty-one livres in commerce; but in what relates to the royal or municipal farm the louis is only worth twenty livres.

The pound or weight of this province is equivalent to twelve ounces of France. There is also the rub, which weighs twenty-five pounds: this is the weight for common purposes.

As to the prices of provisions, I have not thought it necessary to note them, as they augment or diminish with the number of strangers who go to pass the season there; the price in Summer is half that of Winter; although provisions in that season are as cheap as in any town of France.

I shall still add something concerning the port of Villa Franca, which is very remarkable for its natural capaciousness. According to some authors it was formerly called the Port of Hercules; although others place that at Monaco.

The town contains three thousand six hundred inhabitants; it is two miles distant from Nice, and was built in 1295, by Charles II. King of Sicily, and Count of Provence.

It may be said, that the road is one of the finest in Europe: an hundred ships of the line may commodiously ride in it. A lighthouse, advantageously situated, serves to guide ships navigating this sea.

On the other side of the rock on which the lighthouse is built, there is another very spacious gulph, where the tunny fishery is carried on, which is a considerable branch of commerce to the country.

It only remains for me to speak of three roads leading to Nice, which I think necessary for the conveniency of those who wish to pass them on leaving this town. The first is the Genoa road. It passes over the plain of Villa Franca below the castle of St. Alban, and crosses that spot where was formerly the camp of the Savoyard troops. You afterwards ascend a very steep mountain, having the sea continually before your eyes; but the road is tiresome and dangerous. After two hours and a half journey from Nice you leave to your right a small village, called Aiza. Its position is very curious, being on the summits of a mountain, exactly in the form of a cone, and almost perpendicular over the sea. At an hour's walk from this village you come to another, which is the last of the country on this road. It is called Turbie. This place is remarkable for some remains of antiquity. A monument erected in honour of Augustus, called *Trophaea Augusti*; some judgement may still be formed of it from its magnificent ruins. It is asserted, that this was the place where Cæsar numbered the people of the Alps whom he had conquered; which opinion is supported by different inscriptions analogous to the subject. A more particular detail may be seen in a work, intitled, "*Nicea Civitas*," Turin, 1655. From Turbie you soon quit the county of Nice, and enter the principality of Monaco, and from thence into the states of Genoa.

The second road is that from Nice to Turin, which is now made passable for four-wheel carriages, as I have before observed. The first considerable village you come to, after leaving Nice, is Escarene, which is four leagues distant from it. The country is very well cultivated, and planted with Olive-trees to the summits of the mountains. On leaving this place you come to the mountain of Brauve, which takes four hours, although the road is very fine, and almost entirely composed of terraces one above another. You afterwards come to Souspelle, a place, containing three thousand souls, eight leagues distant from Genoa. Its position is very agreeable, being in a well-cultivated valley, abounding in olive-trees.

On leaving Souspelle you immediately begin to ascend another mountain, called Brouis, more elevated than that of Brauve, but covered with olive-trees to the summit. It requires four hours to pass this mountain; and from thence you come to Giandola, which is a mile from the small town Briéglée, where there is commonly a detachment of troops.

This town is covered by the summits of mountains in such a manner, that in Winter the sun is hardly discoverable. Giandola is about twelve hours journey from Nice. On leaving this village you travel about four or five hours by the side of the small river Roida, which makes an astonishing noise, occasioned by its repeated cascades, and empties itself into the Mediterranean near Vintemilia. You pass near the village of Saorgio, where there is a castle

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which commands the high road. You afterwards come to the bourg de Tende, at the foot of the mountain of the same name: this place is about seventeen or eighteen leagues distant from Nice. The mountain is famed for its elevation; and there is often in Winter more than twenty feet depth of snow. It is very dangerous to pass in the months of April and May, on account of the dissolving of the snow, which occasions avalanches* so considerable that they sweep away sometimes ten or twelve mules. It requires three hours to ascend this mountain on the side of the Niel, and a little below the midway there is a kind of inn built by order of the King. You find at the bourg de Tende the people ready either to assist you in ascending the mountains, or to carry you on a kind of chair, or conduct you on a sledge, called coulans. There is not any plain on the summit; for you no sooner reach it than you must descend again. What renders the road less irksome is an establishment of eighteen mules paid for by the king, who cross the mountain every day merely to form a road in the snow, for the convenience of travellers.

From the summit of the mountain you quit the county of Nice, and enter the principality of Piedmont: Linon is the first town. Every thing assumes a new appearance; the mountains are not so high, and better cultivated; the country smiling, and covered with wood. This pass is delightful in Summer, being in a defile of the most picturesque kind as far as Coni, which is about thirty leagues distant from Nice. From Nice to Coni twenty livres are paid for the hire of mules. It is usual to give forty sous a day to the guide, who is employed three days in the journey. From Linon you may travel post all over Italy.

The third road leading to Nice is that of France, commonly called the Chemin du Vard. It is the promenade of strangers, for the sake of the charming prospects it affords, and for the pleasure of walking in a delightful forest on the border of the Vard, at a league distant from Nice, which serves as a limit to the states of his Sardinian Majesty. This river is very wide and dangerous to pass, especially at the melting of the snow; but there are always people ready to assist travellers on being paid. It empties itself into the sea half a league from the high road: as soon as you have crossed it, you come to St. Laurent, the first town on that side France.

I believe this small account will suffice to give a general idea of the town and environs of Nice to those persons who propose to pass a season there, and will give pleasure to those who wish to preserve a recollection of it. The Drawings, being likewise as exact as it was possible for me to make them, will contribute, as well as the Chart affixed to this work, to render it more interesting and intelligible.

* An avalanche is a large portion of snow broken off from the mountain to which it adhered.

EXPLANATION OF THE PLATES.

N° I.

THIS Plate represents the Gulph of St. Aufpice, where the Annual tunny-fishery is carried on to a considerable extent. The little tower seen on the left is a kind of casemate, where there are several pieces of cannon to defend the coast. This place is half a league distant from Villa Franca, crossing the port: its peninsulated situation is very agreeable.

N° II.

This Plate presents a view of the Tower of Turbie, a monument erected in honour of Cæsar. It is below Monaco; the height of the tower may be judged of by comparing it with that of the neighbouring houses. A number of inscriptions are preserved, which have been found in the place. See the book, intituled, "Nicea Civitas."

N° III.

Represents the inside of the Circus of Cimier or Ciminellum, which, according to the opinion of many learned men, was a considerable town of the Roman maritime province. This remain of antiquity is two leagues distant from Nice, and is now filled up with olive-trees, which I was obliged to suppress, in order to shew the inside form of the area. The road which passes under the arch is that from Nice to the convent of Cimier.

N° IV.

This drawing represents the inside of the Circus of Frejus, or Forum Julii. It was much larger than that of Ciminellum, being one hundred and six paces long, or one hundred and sixty-five feet of France. The subterraneous parts are still in tolerable preservation, although they are daily mutilated to take out stones. Frejus is in the road from Nice to Aix, in Provence. The aqueducts which are seen in this town are remains of the works of the Romans, which prove the splendor of this ancient town, which was formerly on the border of the sea.

N° V.

Presents a view of the Castle of St. Andrew, which belongs to the Count of the same name, Viceroy of Sardinia, and formerly Commandant of Nice. The situation of this castle is very picturesque and agreeable, and is a league from the town.

N° VI.

This drawing presents a prospect of the Grotto of St. Andrew, a mile distant from the castle. The road to it is very difficult, though many English ladies have passed it. This place is so lonely, notwithstanding its vicinity to the town, that one could suppose oneself transported amongst the most solitary mountains of the Alps. In the Summer-time you may pass under the arch, and penetrate into the other side of the grotto, where you find yourself in a very lonely valley.

N° VII.

This drawing represents the Vard, which is a river that empties itself into the sea, at a league from Nice, and serves as a limit between France and the States of the King of Sardinia. The mountains in the distance are called St. Genet and la Gaude. The town on the left of the drawing is St. Laurent, the first town of France on that side.

N° VIII.

Is a view of the Church of St. Ponce and the Valley of the same name, also the Convent of Cimier, which is on the left of the drawing. You see likewise the course of the torrent of Paillion, which washes the walls of Nice, and winds through the bottom of the valley on the side of the great Turin Road. The mountains on the right are those of St. Hubert and Carache. This is a most delightful walk, from the goodness of the road and the shade which may be enjoyed.

N° IX.

This drawing represents the entrance of the port of Lympia, and the two extremities of the town behind the castle which was built on the mountain that covers the port, as well as the view of the different hills of the county which are on the border of the sea half-way to the Vard. The ruins seen in the fore-ground of the picture are the remains of a Lazaretto, which the sea has almost destroyed.

N° X.

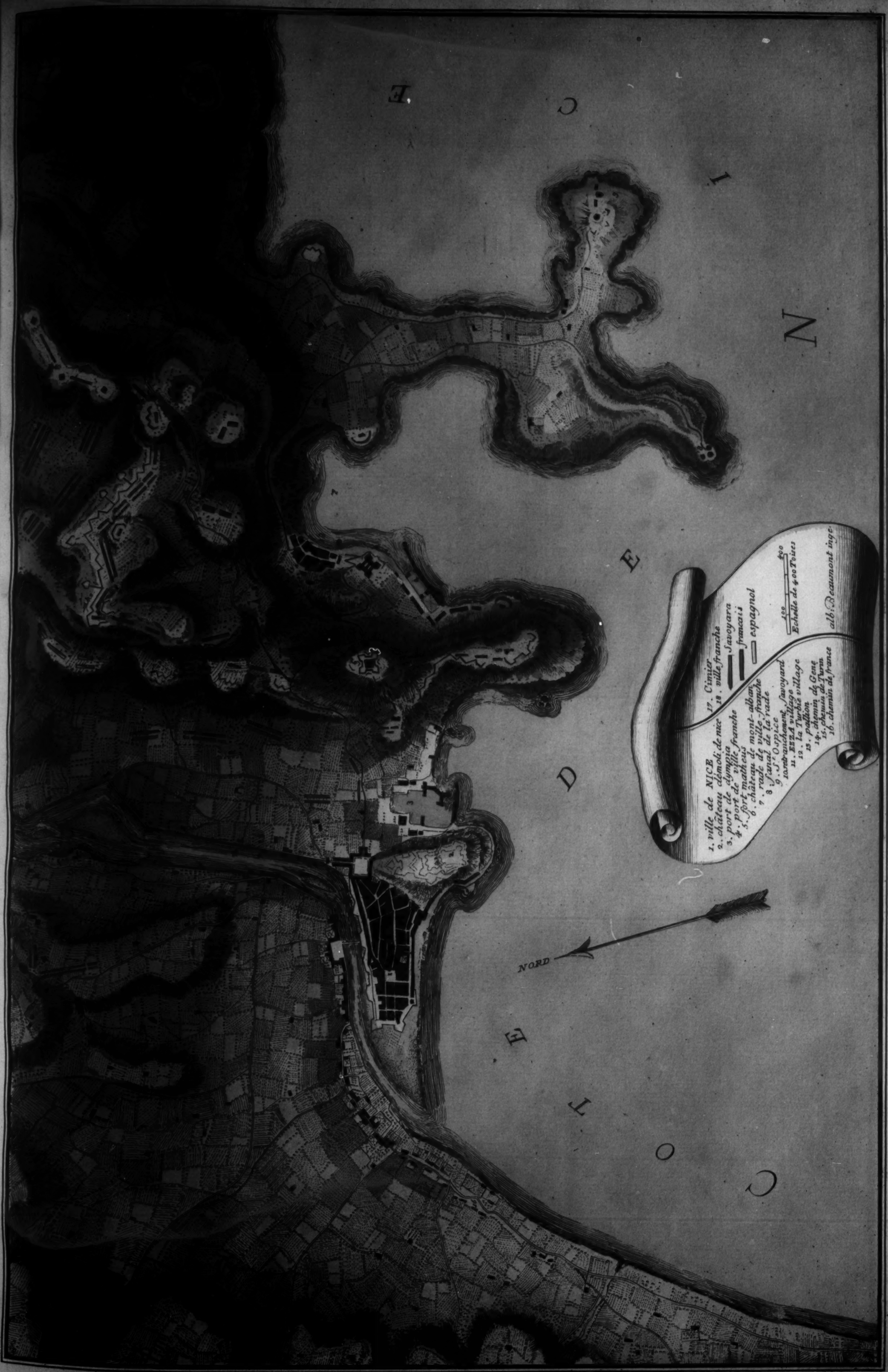
Represents the inside of the port of Lympia and the castle of St. Alban, which is seen on the mountain in the middle of the drawing, and which advances into the sea. This port is in an unfinished state, though there has been much labour bestowed on it for many years, such is the extent of the work.

N° XI.

This Drawing represents a great part of the Coast of Nice, the town and the surrounding mountains, with the entrance of the port of Villa Franca and its lighthouse. This view is taken above the valley of Magnon, on the Vard road. I have given in the Drawing an idea of the manner in which the grounds are cultivated. By this view may be seen how much of the country is covered with olive-trees.

N° XII.

This Piece represents the Port of Villa Franca, and the back of the castle of mount Alban. By this drawing a judgement may be formed of the size of the road. The town and the castle of the same name are also seen. This port was formerly, according to the opinion of some learned men, the port of Hercules. The point of station is a little above the Eastern battery.

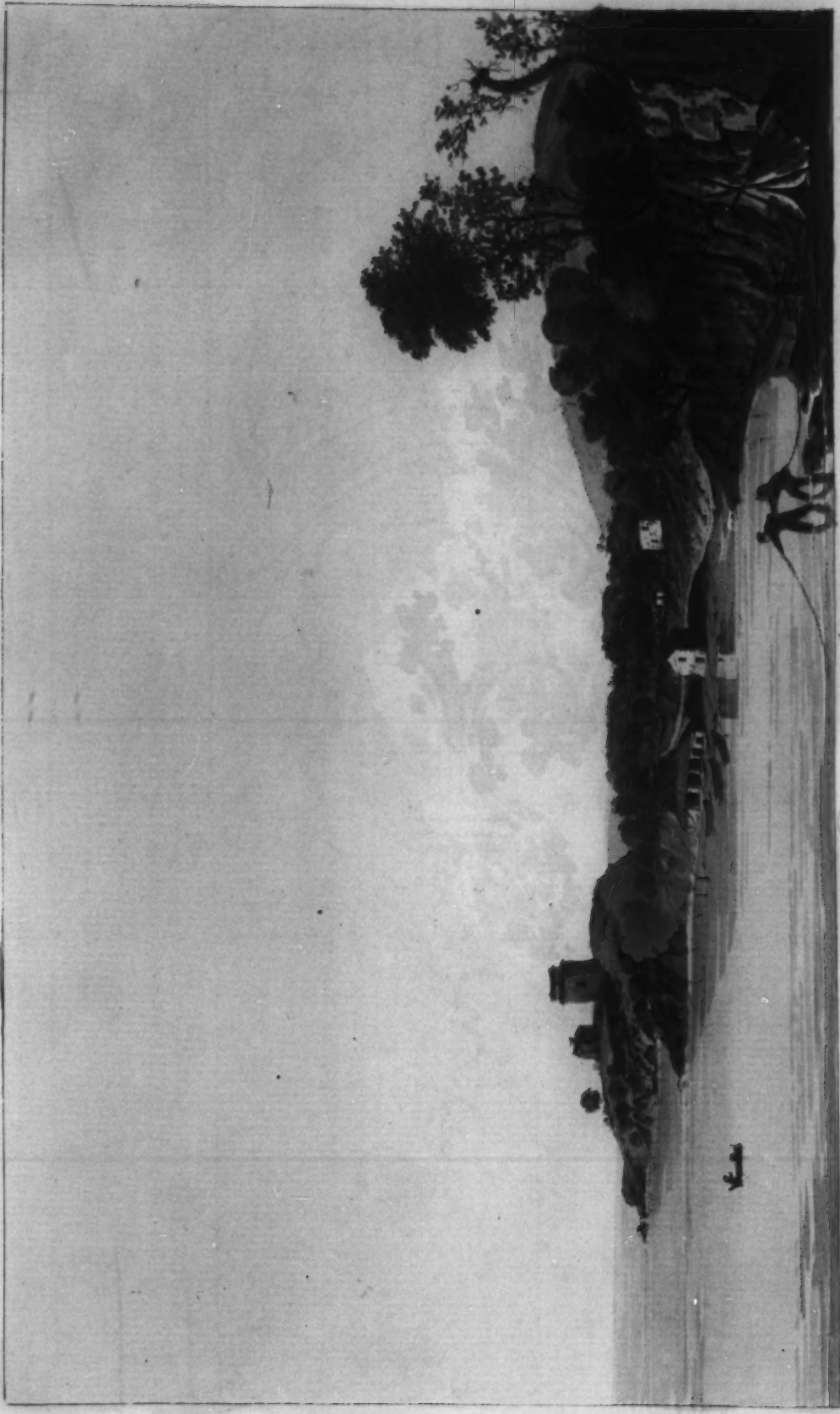


1. ville de NICE
2. château démoli de nice
3. port de dymgia
4. port de ville franche
5. fort matheus
6. château de mont-alban
7. route de ville franche
8. fanal de la route
9. S. Orpice
10. ancrage de Savoyard
11. EZZA village
12. la Turbie village
13. palan
14. chemin de Gené
15. chemin de Turin
16. chemin de France

17. Cimier
18. ville franche
Savoyard
français
espagnol

Echelle de 400 Toises

albi Beaumont inge



*Vue de St. Aspice.
Indigée. May 1791. by Tho. G. W. Land.*



Vue de la Tour de Jarkie.
Publ. par M. de Jarkie, par The. S. Gouland.

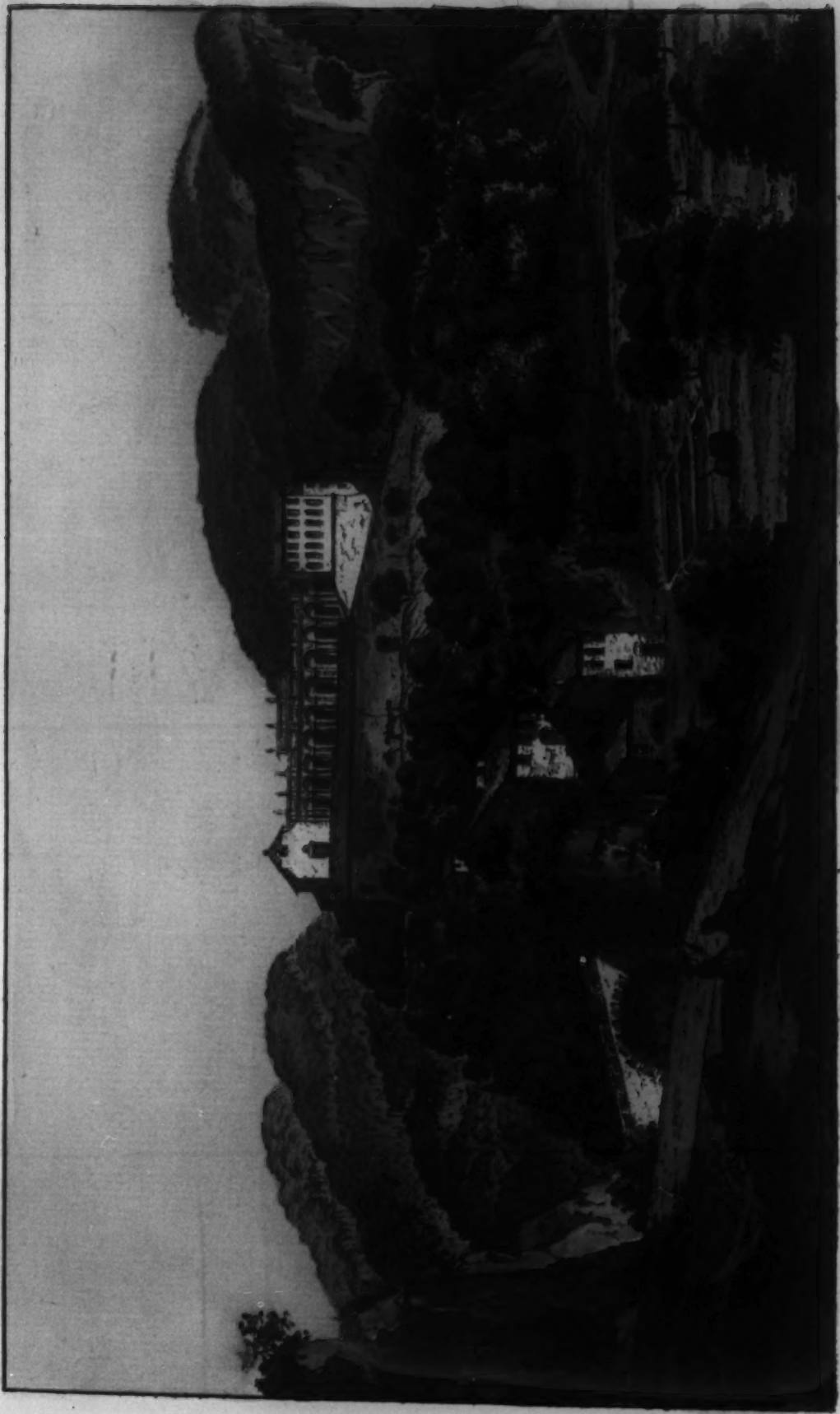


Vue du Cirque de Cimier.
Publiée par ordre de M. le Ministre.





Vue du Cirque de Frejus.
Dessiné et gravé par Tho. Stowland.

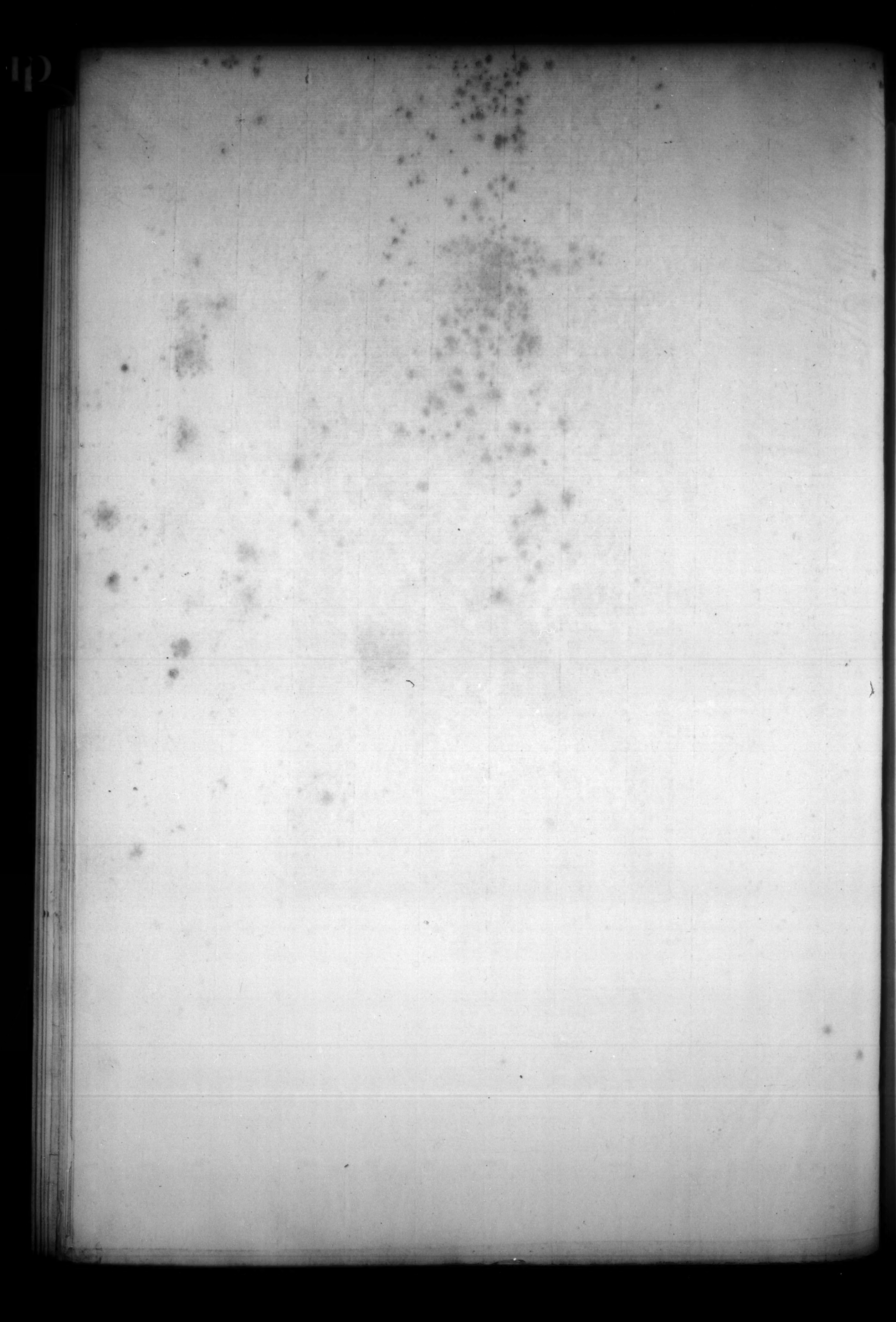


Vue du Chateau de St. Aubert.
Publ. par M. de la Roche, 1791.



Vue de la Grotte de St. André.

Indépendant, May 2, 1870. by Thos. Cleveland.





New York

Published, New York, by Thomas & Greenleaf.



Vue de St Ponce.

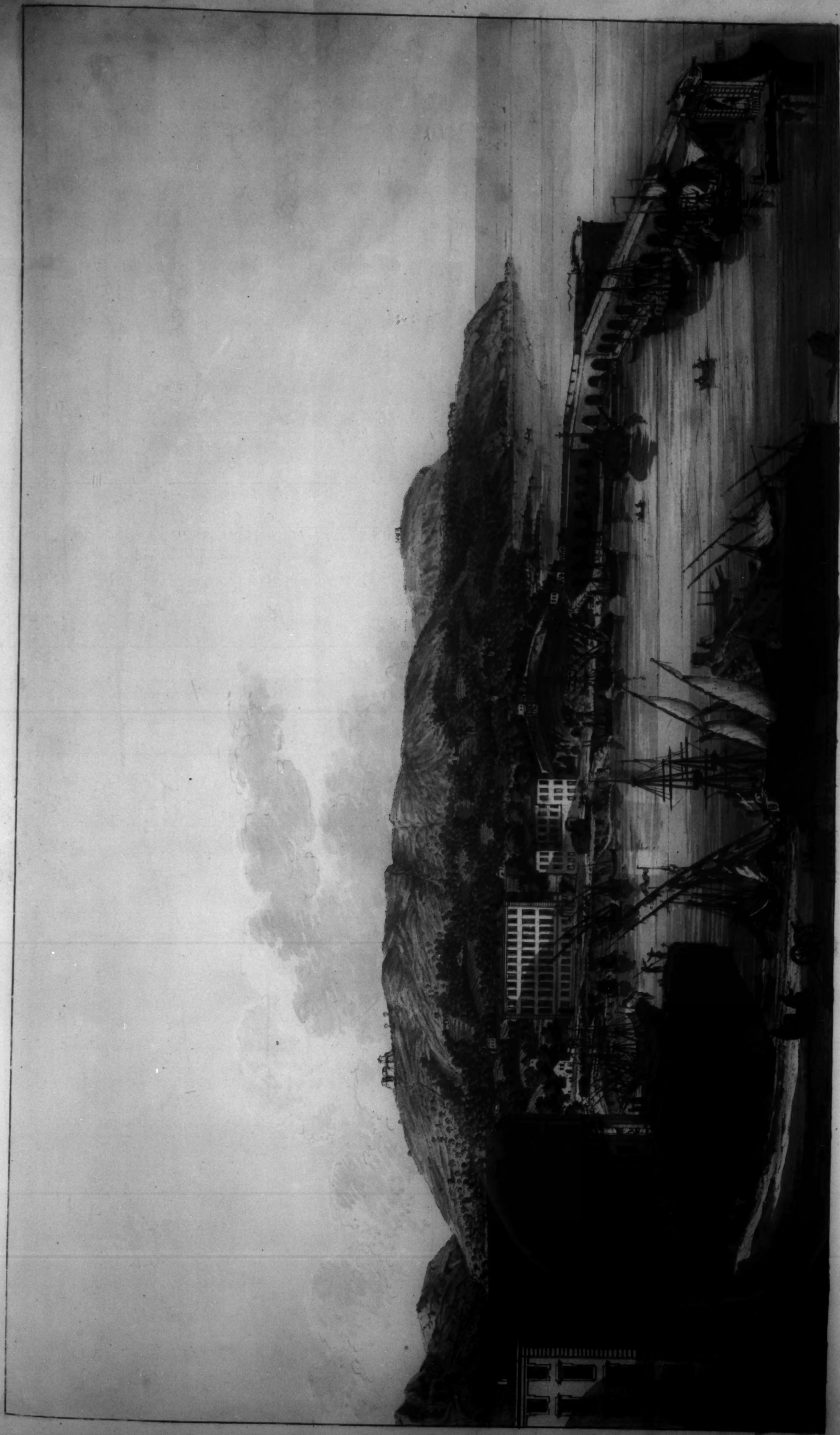
Publ. d. May 2. 1792. by Tho. Cowland.



Vue de l'Entrée du Port de Nice.

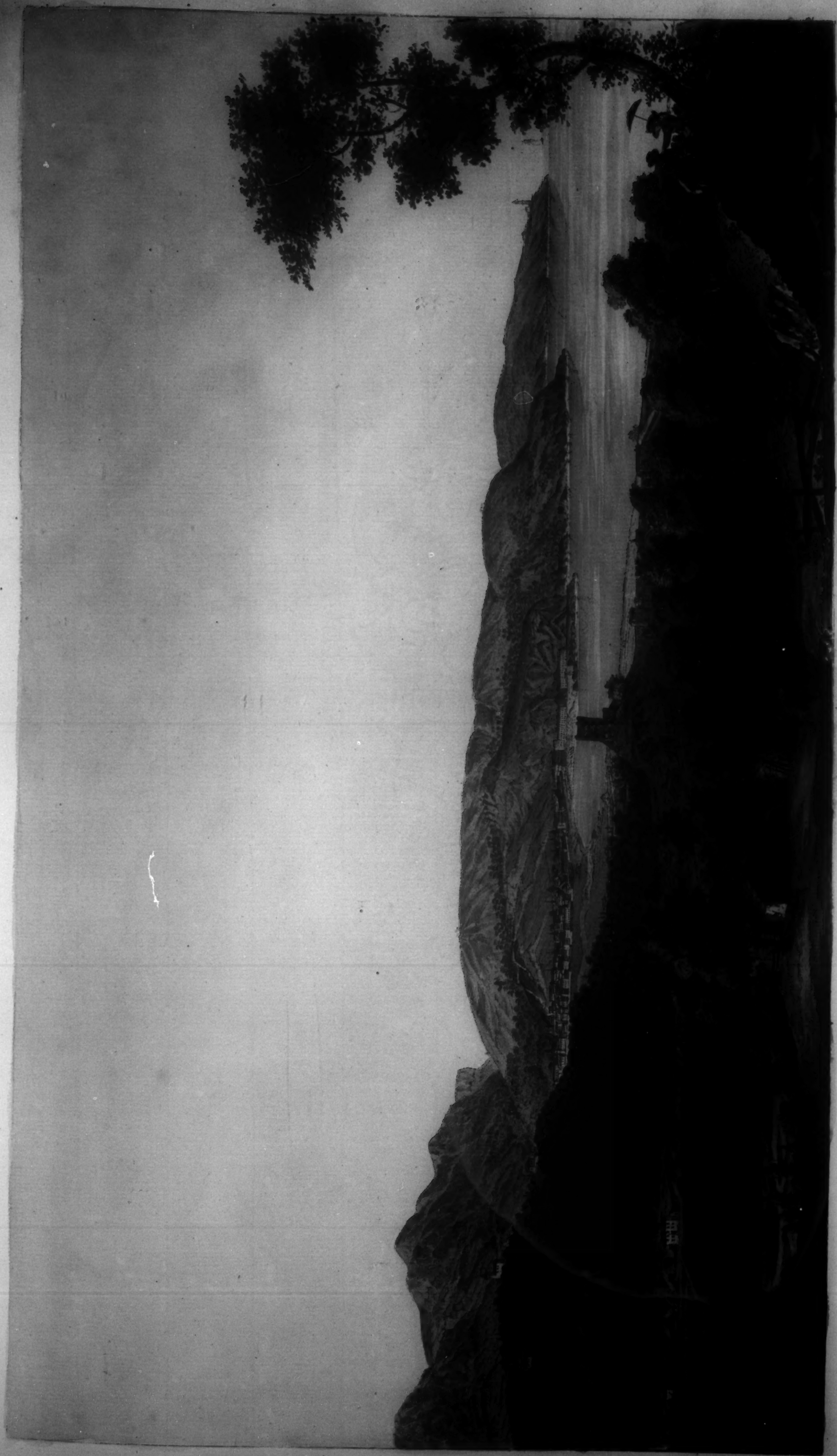
Engraved May 1791. by Tho. Bewland.





Vue du Port de Nice

Publ. d. M. 1791. by Tho. Cowland.



Vue de la Côte de Nice.

Publiée d'après un dessin de Tho. S. Goodland.





Vue du Port de Ville-Franche.

Publiée d'après un dessin de Tho.^s Cowland.

